



Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

One of most frequently requested products from the LMI offices is accurate, local wage data. *Uniform* wage data by occupation at the *local* labor market level is a major gap in our current LMI system. State and local governments conduct most surveys; they use multiple definitions of both occupations and wages. The timing of the surveys varies from state-to-state and is hard to compare. The **Occupation Employment Statistics (OES)** survey expanded its collection to include wages from all states in 1996 to address this need.

With the expanded **OES**, the country will have a standardized wage survey which will allow comparability across state borders in a mix of occupations that will cover virtually the entire economy. The **OES** will now produce a valid "mean" and a median earning for over 800 occupations in over 500 sub-state areas.

The expansion of the **OES** survey, which became operational in 1971, to every state as well as to every Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and to many sub-state areas would eliminate the need for the Alien Labor Certification (ALC) program's ad hoc surveys and **reduce the respondent burden** by

employers. Watershed benefits to the national and state occupation projection programs will also be substantial since these programs use the **OES** program statistics for their raw data.

In the absence of the **OES**, a standardized, cost-effective, periodic, national wage survey would have to be designed that would meet the needs for local wage data and be comparable between areas. Until this expansion is realized, quality and timeliness of wage data is inconsistent.

The **OES** survey is conducted in cooperation with the Employment Training Administration (ETA) and the State employment security agencies (SESAs) and is now designed to obtain national, State, and area occupational estimates for all States. ETA and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) fund the program.

BLS provides the procedures and technical assistance for the survey, with input from ETA's ALC and the ALMIS team; SESAs do the actual collection of the data.

The expanded **OES** survey, which went to the field in the fall of 1996, will yield its first results in late 1997.

OES Survey

- First truly national wage survey.
- Provides detailed occupational and industry information on employment and wages.
- Covers over 800 occupations in more than 500 sub-state areas.
- Eliminates the need for other state wage surveys.
- First data available in fall of 1997.



For additional information, please contact Jim Conley of the ALMIS Team at (202)219-8854.

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